MEAD MEMORIAL CHAPEL - January 27, 1929

Romans XIV-7: For none of us liveth to himself and none dieth to himself.

This is really a statement of relativity, a word which is in the air today but with which we are not concerned it its scientific, but rather in its human bearings.

The truth of this verse nearly everyone endeavors to deny. It seems to be a refutation of the doctrine of indiwiduality but in the world of knowledge we know what relativity means. "He little knows his England who only England knows". It is impossible to know any one subject thoroughly without being lead by that subject into others. Pasteur started life as a chemist but found a knowledge of biology necessary to his understanding of chemistry. Professor Kittredge has said that a man to understand Bedlam would have to have so wide a knowledge that he would be an educated man, for it would lead him back into history, sociology, liguistics et cetera.

Economically we are related beyond our realization. Cotton mills in Massachusetts close because their market has been destroyed. Their market was destroyed because the purchasing power in a corner of Asia dried up owing to the falling off of their local industry. The local industry was the making of hair nets and this industry was buried beneath four hundred thousand tons of fallen tresses. Because a mill hand in Massachusetts bobs her hair she is out of work, not directly but through the influence of her act upon China.

Campbell

Likewise in the deeper reaches of human life there is that relativity. A king is ill. All England, and after England the whole world, waits hourly for news. It is not surprising in a king, but go to the opposite extreme. A man is slowly dying in the frozen wastes about the South Pole, but he dies nobly leaving his comrades and going off alone into the blizzard that he may not retard or impede their chance of escape. Captain Oates does not die to himself, and men have been stirred by that story and will be as long as there is a place in memory for heroic deeds.

Not only what I do but what I say and what I think affect others directly, and they affect others indirectly through their reactions on myself. I cannot think basely or act ignobly without the world being poorer for it, for I am less a man.

I am not touching in this the whole biological field of heredity, but when we realize the way in which the unborn generations may be influenced by our acts, we find an illustration of this verse, that no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. It is enough to remember "That it is a good thing for strength to know that some one needs us to be strong."; and in the words of Seeley in ECCI HOMO "No heart is pure that is not passionate, no virtue safe that is not enthusiastic".